

## Amid Fire Fury, Rebuilding Becomes Herculean Task In Kashmir

Nida Me'raj

Every time a siren shatters the nocturnal silence, Jamsheeda tosses and turns in her bed. She was thrown out of sleep by the same sound last spring and rendered roofless. The tragic tune triggered by burning houses makes her now wonder about the ill-fated families losing their lifetime of means and memories in a jiffy.

"These frequent fire incidents remind me of my own misfortune," the woeful homemaker says. "They remind me of a life

filled with loss and agony."

As the valley is witnessing frequent fire incidents at the moment, the victims are talking about the raging disaster. One such tragedy reflects from the lanes of Gata colony in Srinagar's Noorbagh area.

Following the midnight blaze that damaged 22 houses in March 2022, the families lost everything that they had bought, saved, decorated, amassed in their lives. "At about 1:45 at night," recalls Bilal Sheikh, an inmate of the colony, "my wife's screams woke all of us. From the



window, I saw flames erupting. At that moment, I only tried to save my family."

Apart from clothes, beddings and utensils, these families lost important documents and

**SHE WAS MY YOUNGEST CHILD AND ONLY DAUGHTER,** I don't worry about anything that happened to our house due to fire, but my daughter's death has left me shattered. I wish it would've happened to me more than her."

certificates of their children. "I had also bought some wedding gold and items for my two daughters," Bilal says. "The calamity consumed everything." The inferno-type fire was sparked by a short circuit in

Sheeraza Akhtar's house. By the time her family woke up, their two rooms had already become furnace. "We weren't able to save anything," says Sheeraza. "We're lucky to be alive." Following the **More on P6**

## Kashmir Braces For More Rain, Snowfall

Press Trust Of India

**Srinagar:** Mercury dipped below freezing point at most places in Jammu and Kashmir, but stayed well above it in Srinagar and Kupwara, even as another western disturbance is expected to hit the Valley later this week, officials said on Tuesday.

Srinagar recorded a low of 1.8 degrees Celsius Monday night, up from 0.9 degrees the night before, they said. Qazigund, the gateway to the Valley, registered a minimum of minus 0.8 degrees Celsius, while Kokernag in south Kashmir recorded a low of minus 3.6 degrees, the officials said. The mercury in Kupwara, a frontier district, settled above the freezing point at a low of 2.7 degrees. The tourist resort town of Pahalgam in Anantnag district, which also serves as a base camp for the annual Amarnath Yatra, registered a low of minus 3.2 degrees Celsius – down from minus 0.7 degrees.

The minimum temperature in Gulmarg in Baramulla district was at minus 4.4 degrees Celsius, they said.

The day temperature across the Valley remained low for the second consecutive day as the mercury failed to breach the 10 degree Celsius-mark at all the weather stations.

Meanwhile, the MeT office said moderate snowfall is very likely at many places over the higher reaches. The plains in the Valley are expected to receive light to moderate snow. Light snowfall, with rains in plains of Jammu, is likely at many places in J-K, it said.

While the weather will stay cloudy on Tuesday and Wednesday, widespread moderate snowfall with rains in plains of Jammu and heavy snowfall over the higher reaches, is possible over two days after that, the weatherman said.

Kashmir is currently under the grip of 'Chillai Kalan', the 40-day harshest weather period when the chances of snowfall are maximum and most frequent.

Chillai Kalan begins on December 21 and ends on January 30. The cold wave continues even after that with a 20-day-long 'Chillai Khurd' (small cold) and a 10-day-long 'Chillai Bachha' (baby cold) following it.

....Attack Aftermath

## 50 Held In Rajouri As Searches Intensified

Press Trust Of India

**Jammu:** Over 50 people have been detained so far for questioning in connection with the attack on the minority community in Jammu and Kashmir's Dhangri village even as a massive search operation to track down the terrorists behind the strike continued on the ninth day on Tuesday, officials said.

Seven persons were killed and 14 others injured in the terrorist attack on January 1.

Following the attack, the administration strengthened Village Defence Guards (VDGs) comprising local volunteers and the border grid to keep a tight vigil on possible infiltration routes, the officials said.

They said police posters announcing a reward of Rs 10 lakh to anyone giving credible information about the terrorists have also come up at various places in the district.

A joint cordon and search



operation by the Army, police and CRPF is in progress at over two dozen villages where there were reports of terrorist presence before the attack, the officials said, adding special operational teams of Jammu and Kashmir police, moved from outside Rajouri, have also been deployed at designated locations.

"Anti-terrorist operation is going on at a massive scale to neutralise the terrorists

involved in the Dhangri attack. There are some vital leads and we are working on these to bring the culprits to book," Senior Superintendent of Police Rajouri, Mohammad Aslam told PTL.

He said additional troops of the CRPF along with police were deployed in sensitive areas to strengthen vigil.

Officials said over 50 suspects have been **More on P6**

### DGP For Modernizing Naka Points On Highways

Amid a spike in militant activities in Jammu and Kashmir, especially in the winter capital, the Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh on Tuesday stressed for augmenting and modernizing of more checking and naka points on national highways and on inter district roads to strengthen the safe and secure environment for the people.

"Identify the areas which need our focus to fix our goals of augmentation as well as of better Policing for the welfare of people and for the organization," the DGP said, while chairing 4th quarterly officers meeting at Police Headquarters here, a police spokesperson said Tuesday. The meeting was held to review the **More on P6**

## Foundations Laid For A Sea Change In J&K's Economic Growth: LG

'PM Has Ensured That There Would Be No Shortage Of Funds For Farmers Of J&K'



Observer News Service

**Jammu:** Asserting that this decade in agriculture & horticulture sector belongs to Jammu and Kashmir, the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said on Tuesday that the policies through holistic development plan have laid the foundations for a sea change in Union Territory's economic growth.

Sinha made these remarks after inaugurating Mega Fruit Plant Nursery at Chakroi, RS Pura here on Tuesday. He congratulated the farmers and fruit growers and said the Nursery will provide best technologies as well as true-to-type quality

planting material that will reshape the Horticulture Sector in the area.

"It is a massive achievement that in one year a mega fruit plant nursery has been established in an area where cross border shelling was a normal thing in fields," he said

"This decade in the agriculture & horticulture sector belongs to J&K UT. The policies through holistic development plan have laid the foundations for a sea change in J&K's economic growth," he added.

The LG also shared the vision of the government to bring a significant change in the lives of **More on P6**

**ANTI-TERRORIST OPERATION IS GOING** on at a massive scale to neutralise the terrorists involved in the Dhangri attack. There are some vital leads and we are working on these to bring the culprits to book."

## Elections Our Right But Won't Beg For It: Omar

Press Trust Of India

**Srinagar:** National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said election is the right of the people but Kashmiris will not beg before the Centre to hold polls in Jammu and Kashmir.

"If elections are not held this year, so be it! We are not beggars. I have said it time and again, Kashmiris are not beggars. Election is our right but we will not beg before them for this right. They want to restore the elections to us, good. But if they don't want

to do it, so be it," Omar told reporters in Anantnag district.

Asked about the eviction of people from properties and state lands, Omar claimed it was one of the reasons why elections were not being held in Jammu and Kashmir.

"That's why they are not holding elections. They want to 'harass' the people. Instead of applying balm to the wounds of people, they seem to have a penchant to aggravate the hurt," he said.

The former chief minister said the BJP government **More on P6**

### Mehbooba's Appeal to Ladakhi Leaders

People's Democratic Party chief Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday urged Ladakhis to stand with the people of Jammu and Kashmir for a collective struggle to safeguard their unique identities and interests. The former Jammu and **More on P6**

## Azad's Newly Launched Party Implodes

2 More Leaders Quit, Jairam Ramesh Calls It 'Disappearing Azad Party'

Agencies

**Srinagar:** Amid fast changing political situation in Jammu & Kashmir, former Chief Minister Gulam Nabi Azad's newly launched political party is imploding with two more leaders quitting it on Tuesday.

Former MLC Choudhary Nizamuddin Khatana and his political heir and son Choudhary Gulzar, who was vice-chairman of the Gujar and Pahari Board during the PDP-BJP regime, today resigned from Azad-led party, which is yet to be registered by the Election Commission of India.

"In view of the present political development, I, Choudhary Nizamuddin Khatana, former MLC, hereby tender my resignation from the post of general secretary of DAP including the basic



membership of DAP. This may be regarded as my resignation letter," Khatana said in his resignation letter.

The exit of the father-son duo was expected after former minister Peerzada Muhammad Sayeed returned to the Congress.

Choudhary Gulzar is considered one of the strong contenders for Larnoo seat which is reserved for

the schedule tribes. Peerzada Muhammad Sayeed has influence in the seat as several areas of the erstwhile Kokernag assembly segment are part of the newly carved out ST seat.

Soon after Azad severed his association with the Congress and announced to launch a new political party, his loyalist and former MLA Choudhary Muhammad Akram **More on P6**

## Shehla Rashid In Tweet Trouble

Delhi LG Grants Sanction To Prosecute Former JNUSU Vice President For Tweets About Army

Press Trust Of India

**New Delhi:** Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena has granted sanction to prosecute former JNUSU vice president Shehla Rashid Shora for her three year old tweets on the Indian Army, officials said on Tuesday.

According to officials at the LG office, the sanction is related to a 2019 FIR registered against her under IPC section 153A at Special Cell police station here on the basis of a complaint by an advocate Alakh Alok Srivastava.

They said the sanction has been granted under section 196 of CrPc, 1973 which relates to prosecution for offences against the State and for criminal conspiracy to commit such offence.

"Section 196 1(a) says no court shall take cognisance of any offence punishable under

Chapter VI or under section 153A, of Indian Penal Code... except with the previous sanction of the Central government or of the state government," the L-G office said.

According to the officials, the former Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) leader is accused of promoting enmity between different groups and indulging in acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony through her tweets.

The tweets by Shehla, dated August 18, 2019, had accused the Army of entering houses and "torturing" locals in Kashmir.

The allegations were rejected by the Army as baseless.

Shehla Rashid, who had a brief stint in politics in early 2019 when she joined hands with bureaucrat turned politician Shah Faesal, **More on P6**

### S H O R T T A K E S

#### 3 Killed As Vehicle Falls Into Gorge

Three people were killed after a tempo traveller they were travelling in skidded off the road and rolled down into deep gorge in Doda district on Tuesday evening. Quoting official sources, news agency GNS reported that the accident took place near Khankoot area in the mountainous district late in the afternoon. Soon after the accident, they said, a massive rescue operation was launched by local volunteers who were later joined by police. The rescuers shifted the occupants of the vehicle to the hospital. **More on P6**

#### OGW Held In Srinagar: Police

Police on Tuesday arrested an alleged overground worker of the Lashkar-e-Taiba at a checkpoint in the city and recovered 450 grams of heroin from him, an official said. Farzan Farooz, a resident of Pampore, was booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, he said. "One terror associate of LeT arrested at a naka. Proceeds of terror worth Rs 9.95,000, 450 grams of heroin, letter pads **More on P6**

#### Falling Poplar Tree Kills Man

A young man from Central Kashmir's Budgam district died after a tree fell on him in South Kashmir's Pulwama district, officials said. The slain has been identified as 25-year-old man Towseef Ahmad Mir son of Muhammad Ayoub Mir, a resident of Pakharpora Budgam. The incident occurred near Nallah Vasanmarag Rajpora area of Pulwama district. Official sources said that the victim came under a poplar tree. He sustained injuries and **More on P6**

#### Detenue's House Attached In Shopian

Authorities Tuesday attached the house of a detenue from South Kashmir for his alleged links with militants. The detenue identified as Usman Gulzar Wani, a resident of Hushangpora Nagabal village of South Kashmir's Shopian district is currently lodged in Kot Bhalwal Jail Jammu. Usman as per police was arrested in August last year after an encounter and one SLR, two SLR magazines, and 40 SLR rounds were recovered from his possession. Notably, on 30 August last year, three local militants **More on P6**

#### 5 Clinics, Labs Sealed In Doda

In a major crackdown against the unauthorized private clinics & laboratories, Chief Medical Officer Doda, Dr M Y Mir, on the directions of District Administration sealed 05 private clinics during surprise checking in Doda town. During the day-long inspection, the team headed by CMO Doda checked around 57 private clinics in the Doda town, of which 05 were sealed for not having the valid registration documents of the competent authority as provided under the Nursing Homes **More on P6**

#### Stray Dogs Injure Minor

A minor was seriously injured after stray dogs attacked him in Baghbella area of Karnah in north Kashmir's Kupwara district. An official said that stray dogs pounced upon 4-year-old Zoya Jahangeer daughter of Jahangeer Ahmad of Baghbella, resulting in critical injuries to her. He said family members who were present at the time of incident, somehow managed to rescue the girl and shifted her to sub district hospital Tanghar where she was being treated **More on P6**





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## 'Biodiversity Of Large Urban Parks Affected By Surrounding Green Area'

Press Trust Of India

Scientists have found that biodiversity in large parks in urban environments can be affected by surrounding, smaller green areas.

The researchers from Tokyo Metropolitan University, Japan, surveyed two insect families inhabiting large parks in the Tokyo Metropolitan Area, one more mobile than the other, the study said.

According to the study, led by Associate Professor Takeshi Osawa, the more mobile family seemed to

The team characterized the quality of surrounding urban areas as habitats, using satellite data to gauge how smaller green spaces make the matrix either hospitable or inhospitable, the study said.

Through detailed surveys looking at each of the taxa found in traps, they were able to quantify both their abundance and the number of discernible species, the study said.

For Heteroptera, they found that both the number of species and individuals caught were correlated with the area of



benefit from surrounding areas, while the less mobile species did not.

The work highlights the importance of managing smaller areas in maintaining biodiversity, the study said.

Prominent green spaces in urban centres provide habitats for local wildlife and are vital to maintaining biodiversity.

However, that doesn't mean other areas are devoid of life: for example, such spaces are often surrounded by smaller, fragmented patches of green like gardens and roadsides which form a "hospitable matrix" surrounding the central park or grassland, the study said.

Though the composition and area of parks themselves are often the focus of studies, surrounding areas are often described as an impenetrable "sea" surrounding the central "island". Their impact on biodiversity remains to be addressed, the study said.

The scientists focused on two insect taxa, Carabidae, or the ground beetle, and Heteroptera. Heteroptera can fly over long distances and are thus able to travel more and spread to the matrix, the study said.

the hospitable matrix, the study said.

This is direct evidence for how biodiversity may be affected by a network of smaller green spaces surrounding the main "island". On the other hand, they noticed that the diversity of Carabidae was unaffected, the study said.

In fact, the number of Carabidae caught was actually negatively correlated with surrounding green spaces. They believe this to be due to predators using the hospitable matrix to access the central park area and present a threat to the beetles, the study said.

The team's work highlights the importance and often neglected role of small, fragmented green spaces in an urban environment which extends hospitable area for wildlife in parks and other prominent green spaces, effectively forming a larger "concealed island in the urban sea", the study said.

The scientists hope that these findings inform effective conservation strategies to maintain and promote biodiversity in an increasingly urbanized environment, the study said.



## Women Work Harder Than Men, Finds Anthropological Study In Rural China

The Conversation

For most people around the world, physical work takes up a great amount of time and energy every day. But what determines whether it is men or women who are working harder in households? In most hunter-gatherer societies, men are the hunters and women are the gatherers – with men seemingly walking the furthest. But what's the labour breakdown in other societies?

We carried out a study of farming and herding groups in the Tibetan borderlands in rural China – an area with huge cultural diversity – to uncover which factors actually determine who works the hardest in a household, and why. Our results, published in Current Biology, shed light on the gender division of work across many different kinds of society.

The majority of adults across the world are married. Marriage is a contract, so one might expect roughly equal costs and benefits from the union for both parties. But unequal bargaining power in a household – such as one person threatening divorce – can lead to unequal contributions to the partnership.

Leaving home

We decided to test the hypothesis that leaving your natal area after heterosexual marriage to live with your spouse's family may contribute to a higher level of workload. In such marriages, the new person typically isn't related to, and doesn't share a history with, anyone in their new household. Without blood relatives around them, they might therefore be at a disadvantage when it comes to bargaining power.

The most common form of marriage around the world is where women are the "dispersers", leaving their native home, while men stay with their families in their natal area. This is known as patrilocality.

The Conversation logo

Neolocality – in which both sexes disperse at marriage, and the couple lives in a new place away from both their families – is another common practice in many parts of the world. Matrilocality – where women stay in the natal family and men move to live with the wife and her family – is quite rare. And duolocality – where neither sex leaves home and husband and wife live apart – is very rarely seen.

Luckily, in the diverse Tibetan borderlands, all four of these different dispersal patterns can be found across various different ethnic groups.

Our study focused on rural villages from six different ethnic cultures. With our collaborators from Lanzhou University in China, we interviewed more than 500 people about their dispersal status after marriage, and invited them to wear an activity tracker (like a Fitbit) to assess their workloads.

Women work harder

Our first finding was that women worked much harder than men, and contributed most of the fruits of this labour to their families. This was evidenced both by their own reports of how much they worked and by their activity trackers.

Women walked on average just over 12,000 steps per day, while men walked just over 9,000 steps. So men also worked hard, but less so than women. They spent more time in lei-

sure or social activities, or just hanging around and resting.

This may be partly because women are, on average, physically weaker than men, and may thus have reduced bargaining power. But we also found that individuals (be they male or female) who disperse at marriage to live away from their kin have higher workloads than those who stay with their natal families.

So if you are female and move away from home at marriage (as most women do throughout the world), you suffer not just in terms of missing your own family but also in terms of workload. When both sexes disperse and no one lives with their natal families, both sexes work hard (as there is little help from kin) – but the woman still works harder. According to our study, perfect sex equality in workload only occurs in instances where men disperse and women do not.

These results help us to understand why women globally disperse, but men generally do not. Dispersal is especially bad for men – adding about 2,000 more steps per day to their step count, but only adding about 1,000 steps per day for women.

Time and energy spent on farming, herding and housework competes with free time. So substantial labour contribution to households in these rural areas can result in less time spent on rest. From an evolutionary view, giving up rest isn't favourable unless it contributes to higher fitness – such as enhancing offspring survival.

We don't actually know whether it is favourable in this case, as it hasn't been researched much. It may be true in poor and rural areas around the world, but less so in wealthier settings.

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## KU Advertises Six Administrative Positions

### Academicians Welcome Move

#### Agencies

Srinagar: The Kashmir University (KU) authorities on Tuesday put several administrative positions including Registrar and Director IT to advertisement. The advertisement comes days after it was reported how temporary arrangement to these posts was promoting favoritism and monopoly.

Sources said that the decision to advertise these posts was taken after the Vice Chancellor Dr. Neelofar Khan passed instructions to immediately advertise these posts so that the same are filled up through proper channels.

"Some officers were trying to sabotage the advertisement and get it delayed to continue with the temporary arrangement but the VC pulled up the officers and ordered that the advertisement be issued without any delay," the sources added.

The advertised posts (all Tenure Positions) include Registrar Main Campus, Librarian Allama Iqbal Library, Director Directorate of Physical Education and Sports, Director Information Technology and Support System, Director North Campus Baramulla and Director Institute of Technology, Zakura.

The appointment to the post of Registrar shall be tenure basis for a period of three years and to other tenure posts for a period of five years, as per the Brief Advertisement Notice No.1 of 2023 Dated 10/01/2023.

The Advertisement Notice mentions that the age of applicants should preferably be not more than 57 years for the post of Registrar and Librarian, while it will be 55 years for other posts.

The date for submission of online form/hard copy starts from January 16.

It was reported several times in the last seven months that the University authorities were allegedly promot-

ing favoritism on important administrative positions by not putting these positions to proper advertisement.

The three year tenure of In-Charge Registrar Dr Nisar had ended last year in January 2022 and was awaiting proper advertisement since then. Academicians of the University had alleged that the Registrar was continuing without any formal orders on continuation.

The post of Director IT has been held for the last more than six years by one Scientist allegedly owing to his proximity with the administration. The In-Charge Director has not been rotated for six years in total violation of the University's own three year rotation policy for all HOD's and Directors.

The Scientist has faced serious allegations related to his Ph.D Degree and grant of huge sums of money in lakhs as medical reimbursement to his late mother's treatment allegedly in violation of reimbursement rules.

Sources said an inquiry is underway to ascertain the complaints made against the accused Scientist.

The academicians of KU have welcomed the Advertisement Notice and demanded that the process of recruitment should be fast-tracked.

"We appreciate the VC for opposing the forces who were opposing the Advertisement for the last six months," said an academician wishing anonymity.

The academicians have however demanded that the VC should immediately remove incumbent officials holding the advertised posts so that there is no favoritism in the recruitment process.

"If any of these officials happens to be an applicant for any of the posts, then the whole process will be doubtful from the beginning," they said, adding that if these officials do not intend to apply, then they should furnish an undertaking before the VC that they will not apply for any of the positions—(KNO)

## People Protest Against Ration Curtailment In Maisuma

#### Agencies

Srinagar: The ration curtailment issue continues to trigger protests in Kashmir capital Srinagar.

A large number of men and women Tuesday staged a protest in the Maisuma area of Srinagar city urging the government to roll back its order and provide ration to the people under the old scheme.

"Earlier we used to get 11 kgs of ration but that is not the case now. We are entitled to only a 4 kg ration which is not sufficient for a family," the women protesters said.

The protesters appealed to the government

to take serious note of the situation and roll back its earlier order.

"Rice is a staple food of people in Kashmir. Instead of stopping the additional ration, people should be given ration in abundance," the protesters said and appealed to the LG administration to take a decision on humanitarian grounds.

Pertinently, all the major political parties of Jammu and Kashmir including the Apni Party, National Conference, PDP, and Peoples Conference have been impressing the government to continue supplying ration to the people under the earlier scheme. [KNT]

## Smell Emanating From Achan Dumping Site Irks Patients

#### Agencies

Srinagar: Department of Housekeeping and Sanitation at SKIMS Soura is mulling writing to Srinagar Municipal Corporation asking it to redress the genuine matter with regard to the foul smell emanating from the "Achan Dumping Site", which continues to be a great source of inconvenience to patients and attendants at the hospital.

"The patients admitted in SKIMS are facing tremendous problems, especially during the night due to the foul smell of "Achan Dumping Site", this is what the information seeker MM Shuja, who is a social activist wanted to know the official stand

from the hospital authorities through an application filed by him under Right to Information Act.

The hospital has confirmed that it is a genuine problem and needs to be addressed.

"It is based on facts, and as such, it is to inform that the whole vicinity adjacent to the Dumping site of Srinagar Municipal Corporation (Achan) including SKIMS Hospital, its residential quarters, and other areas are facing tremendous problems, especially during the hot season and therefore the matter may please be taken up with the higher authorities of Srinagar Municipal Corporation Srinagar for redressal of this genuine grievance. [KNT]



## Mayor SMC Reviews Winter Contingency Action Plan

#### Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Mayor of Srinagar, Junaid Azim Mattu Tuesday chaired a high level meeting here to review the winter contingency action plan.

The meeting discussed threadbare preparedness, action plan and steps to be taken in case of any eventuality during the ongoing winters.

Issuing clear-cut guidelines to the concerned officials, the Mayor directed all HODs to establish a joint control room in coordination with allied departments so that there will be smooth clearance of the roads.

In order to ensure hassle free movement in and around hospitals, Junaid directed CSO to sprinkle salt within hospital premises well in advance especially on ramps so that the general public does not face any inconvenience.

He also directed the PDD department to keep all front line warriors ready in case of any eventuality. On the occasion, the PDD Officials assured com-

### CEO SSC Visits City Areas To Review Ongoing Works

#### Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Commissioner SMC, CEO Smart City Srinagar, Athar Amir Khan toured the parts of city to take on the spot review of the undergoing works being carried out by Smart City Project. The high level visit was also attended by other senior officials from the Srinagar Municipal Corporation and Smart City.

While taking on spot

inspection of works being undertaken at M.A Road, Ghantaghar, Polo view, Residency Road. Athar was assured full cooperation from allied departments to realize all the projects in time. Highlighting the importance of timely completion of all the undertaken projects, Athar impressed upon the concerned officials to expedite the pace of work so that the projects are completed within a stipulated time frame.

plete readiness of its frontline warriors with buffer stock of electric transformers

Commissioner SMC, Managing Director KPDLCL, CE KPDLCL Kashmir, CE Jal Shakti, Director FC&CA, Director Social Welfare, Joint Commissioners

SMC, Secretary SMC, FA/CAO SMC, Health Officer SMC, SE Drainage Circle, MVO SMC, Ex.Engineer L/R Divisions, CEO SMC and other senior officials from different departments and SMC were present in the meeting.

## Under Phase-1, 59,000 Smart Meters Installed In City

#### Observer News Service

Srinagar: In order to resolve the bottlenecks in installation of smart electric meters in Srinagar City, a meeting of senior Officers was held under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Ajiaz Asad.

The DC took a detailed review of feeder wise progress of smart meter installation in Srinagar made so far and discussed measures to resolve impediments

hampering installation process.

The DC was apprised by MD KPDLCL about the implementation of smart metering project in Srinagar. He informed the ease and transparency gained by the consumer in knowing about the bill and usage in smart meter installations. He informed that under the smart metering project 59000 meters have been installed in Phase-I (completed) and 11000 in Phase-II (Target 1.5 Lac lot A + 1.5 Lac lot B) in Srinagar City by the project implementation

Agency (PIA) RECPDCL. The contract has been awarded by RECPDCL(PIA) to M/S Techno Electric and M/S Anvil Cables respectively for Phase-I and Phase II Lot A. With a total consumer base of about 2.3 lacs in Srinagar city the target is to be completed this year by end of October. He shared with the meeting positive feedback given by consumers across the city, who benefited by installation of smart meters across the city.

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- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,2452222,2452155
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- PATTAN: 01954-293507
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#### HIGHWAY STATUS



Sgr-Jammu highway - ( Open )  
Mughal Road - (Closed)  
Srinagar- Leh- (Closed)

 <b>HIJRI CALENDAR</b> 18 Jumad al-Sani 1444	<b>PRAYERS</b>	
	FAJR	6:08
	ZUHR	12:37
	ASR	4:01
	Magrib	5:45
	ISHA	7:08

## This Day In History

- 1055 - Theodora is crowned Empress of the Byzantine Empire.
- 1158 - Vladislav II of Bohemia becomes king
- 1599 - Jacob van Neck's fleet leaves Bantam, Java in modern day Indonesia with 1 million pounds of pepper and cloves and a further half a ship full of nutmeg, mace and cinnamon
- 1693 - Mt Etna in Sicily erupts with estimated 7.4 magnitude, most power Italian earthquake, killing around about 60,000
- 1787 - Titania & Oberon, moons of Uranus, discovered by William Herschel.
- 1838 - 1st public demonstration of telegraph message sent using dots & dashes at Speedwell Ironworks, Morristown, New Jersey by Samuel Morse and Alfred Vail.
- 1861 - Mexico City captured by Juarez (Lib) in War of Reform
- 1861 - Alabama secedes from the Union (US Civil War)
- 1865 - Battle of Beverly, West Virginia, Confederate forces attack Union post.
- 1879 - Zulu war against British colonial rule in South Africa begins.
- 1923 - French & Belgian troops occupy Ruhr to collect reparations.
- 1924 - A republic is proclaimed in Greece; King George II is deposed and Eleutherios Venizelo is named Prime Minister of the Greek National Assembly.
- 1942 - Japan conquers Kuala Lumpur, Malaya.
- 1943 - US & Britain relinquish extraterritorial rights in China.
- 1959 - Hanif Mohammad completes 499 runs for Karachi, then 1st class cricket world record.
- 1964 - Panama ends diplomatic relations with US.
- 1972 - East-Pakistan becomes independent state of Bangladesh

### From KO Archives

## 4 CRPF Jawans Shot Dead By Colleagues

#### Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a bizarre incident four personnel of Central Reserve Police Force were gunned down by their own colleagues at the Meteorological Station in Barzulla early today.Two more CRPF personnel were injured.

Reports said that at around four in the morning, the personnel of 87th battalion of the CRPF returned to the complex after finishing their night duty. Official sources said that their colleagues inside the complex mistook their entry as a militant raid and opened fire. Four Jawans were killed on the spot and two more were wounded critically, sources said. KPS however quoting official sources said a group of unidentified gunmen sneaked into the sub-headquarters of the CRPF hurling grenades and firing indiscriminately causing the death of four personnel. The news agency said the assailants escaped under the cover of darkness.

Inspector General of CRPF A Joshi however ruled out the hand of militants in the incident and said that the incident was a result of mistaken identity. He said a team headed by an officer of the rank of DIG has been constituted to investigate the matter. The dead have been identified as Head Constable K K Pandey, Man Singh, K S Budhe and Bupinder Ram. The injured CRPF personnel have been identified as B P Pai and Dinesh Singh.

CNS quoting defence experts has said that the tremendous pressure on security personnel was building up in the wake of Fidayeen attacks on security camps. Today's incident is indicative of the mounting psychological strain upon the security personnel.

(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 11 January, 2000)

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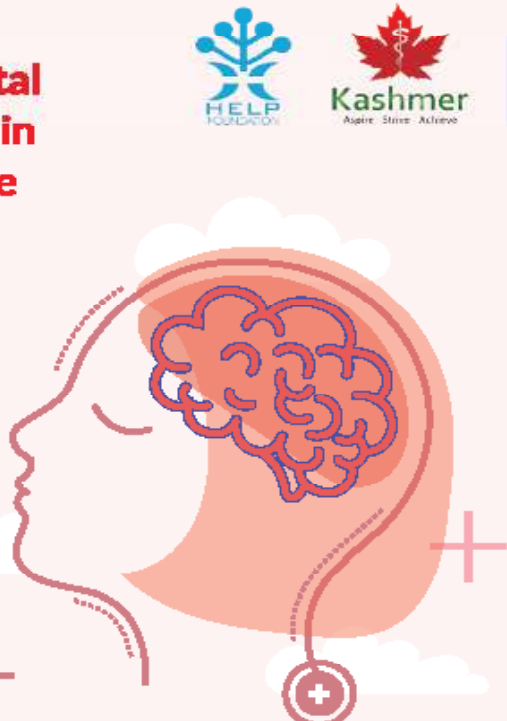
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KASHMIR OBSERVER  
Wednesday | 11-01-2023

Coping With Winter

The temperature in Kashmir Valley is experiencing a steep drop as we get to the middle of Chillai Kalan, the harshest 40-day period of winter in Kashmir. Currently, the nighttime temperature goes below freezing point. The temperature at high altitude areas goes further down. Although the vision in Srinagar is still limited by the fog, recent days have been clear and sunnier.

This is true that winter in Kashmir is a big draw for tourists from mainland India, more so in Chillai Kalan, which is generally associated with extreme cold and snowfall, a novelty for the rest of the country. Chilla Kalan has in the process acquired a certain cultural resonance. The period has also become a familiar fixture in the Valley's tourism calendar. It features in all tourism adverts which promise a picturesque snow-covered valley to prospective tourists.

But while tourists find the winter scenery enchanting, and are excited by the novelty of living in a much colder climate, what about Kashmiris? They have more practical concerns, as Chillai Kalan is a dreary and tedious part of their quotidian lives. They cannot be happy about the extended extreme cold season because, with it, their businesses suffer and the food supply becomes uncertain with the frequent closure of Jammu-Srinagar highway. The most pressing of all the issues is the power shortage, more so, in rural areas. Power breakdowns are also common, which bring mundane, everyday hardships in its train.

Winter in Kashmir may be quaint and idyllic, it also means harsh living conditions. And the erratic electricity only aggravates this fact. Compared to past winters, nothing has changed for the better on the ground. In fact, in some aspects, the situation is only worse off. The power supply has reduced to a trickle in parts of the Valley, with long unscheduled power cuts the order of the day - albeit, in some urban areas including the situation on power front has been relatively better.

The debate about power in Valley, however, doesn't stop with the availability of the electricity through winter. It is a much larger debate about the inability of the successive governments to meet the domestic demand for power out of the region's own water resources. The issue is simple and it is this: we are a region that exports electricity but purchases power at a hefty cost for its own consumption. This necessitates the government to plan and take action to ensure that we have enough electricity for the winter, if not in the immediate to medium term, then at least in the long term.

OTHER OPINION

Ghulam Nabi Azad's party undone

The last election for the J&K legislative assembly was in 2014. The Assembly was dissolved in November 2019, months after the BJP pulled out of the PDP-led ruling alliance and the government fell. The dissolution was controversial, and as it turned out, a precursor to the August 5, 2019 revocation of special status and division of the state into two Union Territories. It ensured that no elected government would be in place at that time to oppose or argue with the constitutional changes. The Centre's decision to jail political leaders of the main regional parties to prevent them from mobilising against the August 5 decisions deepened the political vacuum.

A new political tier was inserted by holding elections for the District Development Council. Delhi's attempt seemed to be to create a new political class, and wear down the established political parties in the Valley. The coming together of the National Conference, PDP, CPM, J&K People's Conference and a few other parties for the DDC elections posed a new challenge for the Centre. The alliance showed that the old regional parties still had a following. Against this background, the arrival of the DAP suggested the possibility of an election in the offing. The revision of electoral rolls after the completion of the delimitation exercise also pointed in this direction. However, it seems now that the next testing ground may be the J&K panchayat elections in 2023. An indication of this came with the State Election Commission's order to officials to update the panchayat election rolls. The results could provide a hint of whether and when the Assembly elections might be held in the new year.

The delay in holding assembly elections in J&K is unconscionable especially as the government repeatedly declares that the security situation is under control. It encourages the impression that it is Delhi's inability to turn the political climate in the Union Territory in a desirable direction that is causing the delay. The churn in the DAP, with exits of several Jammu region stalwarts — now it appears to be a party of the Chenab Valley only — who had left the Congress to join Azad, is comparable only to the high levels of discontent in the BJP's Jammu unit. Who else will leave Azad might become apparent when the Bharat Jodo Yatra reaches Jammu in the new year.

The Indian Express

Assad, A Pariah No More



Asad Mirza

Russia, Turkiye and UAE have initiated plans to start talks with Bashar Al-Assad, an unthinkable step till date, and establish peace once again in war torn Syria.

It seems as if the pariah of the Arab world, Bashar Al-Assad, may soon get a reprieve, as the global and regional powers rally together to forgive him and try to bolster his regime. The latest efforts may also result in further weakening of the US influence in the region.

Turkish efforts

This change in Turkish stand is sponsored by Assad's major military ally Russia and the UAE, which have sought to improve Assad's standing in the Middle East to help balance Iranian influence in Syria.

Whereas several years ago, countries in the region would have looked at such a rapprochement negatively, they are now supportive and that may be construed as an important shift.

Events of the last week report that regional players Turkiye and UAE, in partnership with global player Russia have initiated diplomatic efforts to rehabilitate Syria's President Bashar al-Assad, and try to find an end to the decade-old war in Syria

Turkiye, which previously backed the 2011 rebellion against Assad, is now prepared to publicly recognise his rule over Syria and work to rebuild diplomatic, security and trade ties, in a complete about turn, in order to ensure peace on its south-western border.

Basically, Turkiye wants Assad to rule out allowing the US-backed Kurdish dominated, People's Defence Units or People's Protection Units (YPG), to form an autonomous area in northern parts of the country that they currently control, as part of any future peace agreement, if the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan restarts any reconciliatory process.

Reports say that Erdogan floated the idea of meeting with Assad as recently as last Thursday, after high-level meetings between Syrian and Turkish officials earlier in Moscow. Erdogan has been reported as saying that, we will come together as leaders according to the developments, hinting at a meeting with Assad and Putin, soon.

Turkiye has lately indicated that it was preparing to put aside hostilities with neighbouring Syria. Frustrated by Washington's refusal to end military assistance to Kurdish militia in Syria, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is seeking to resolve the matter through other brokers in the conflict.

Russian and Emirati Stand

For Russia, such a deal will help it show it can successfully challenge US influence in Syria and the region.

Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered his military to intervene in support of Syrian President Bashar al Assad in 2015, helping to tip the balance in the civil war in Syria, in favour of the Assad regime.

As part of a flurry of diplomatic activity around Syria, the UAE's foreign minister met Assad in Damascus last week and reiterated support for a political solution to the conflict.

UAE has moved closer to Assad, with the Syrian president visiting the country last year, his first trip to an Arab state since the start of the civil war. The visit signalled strongly that Gulf leaders who initially supported a rebellion against him are ready to welcome Damascus back into the Arab fold.



Syrian President Bashar al-Assad (R) shaking hands with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan during a meeting in Aleppo, Syria, on 6 February 2011 (AFP)

Yria's uprising quickly morphed into an international conflict drawing in Russia, Iran, Turkiye and the US and reverberating across the Middle East and Europe. Assad remains under US and European sanctions over the war, which according to UN estimates has killed more than 350,000 civilians.

US Response

Reportedly, the US is 'Very Concerned' about possible Turkish meddling in Syria. US State Department spokesperson Ned Price when asked last week, about a potential Erdogan-Assad meeting said that the US will not normalise and we do not support other countries normalising relations with the Assad regime.

But there are voices in the region that the US needs to understand that its presence in Syria is unnecessary and unjustified and further, countries in the region are increasingly acting independently of the US.

The YPG and allied fighters in northern areas of Syria bordering Turkiye are supported by the United States and estimated to control roughly a third of Syria's territory. Ankara views the YPG as a threat due to its ties to an outlawed Kurdish group, which has sought self-rule in Turkiye for decades. The Syrian government also opposes any form of eventual Kurdish autonomy in Syria.

“

It seems as if the pariah of the Arab world, Bashar Al-Assad, may soon get a reprieve, as the global and regional powers rally together to forgive him and try to bolster his regime. The latest efforts may also result in further weakening of the US influence in the region

Erdogan has repeatedly warned of a Turkish incursion in northern Syria to push back the YPG, something the US has said could embolden Islamic State militants and other hardline fighters still present there.

Earlier, the Defence Ministers from Turkiye and Syria met for the first time in December last year since the civil war erupted in the Arab state in 2011, the high point so far in a rapprochement that's been months in the making.

Turkiye's Hulusi Akar and his Syrian counterpart Ali Mahmoud Abbas held talks at a summit in Moscow, hosted by the Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu.

The discussions then had focused on the Syrian civil war and collaboration against 'all terrorist groups' in the Middle East state, Turkiye said, in a thinly veiled reference to Kurdish militia in Syria.

Erdogan's Gain

A political deal with Assad could help Erdogan claim a victory against the YPG without risking a military operation and greater US ire, the people said, adding that Russian and Turkish troops are expected to start joint patrols along border areas with northern Syria soon. Syria could also start coordinated patrols in the future there.

Syria remains under strict Western sanctions and is suspended from the Arab League. Improved relations between Turkiye and Syria will be a major success for Russia.

Ankara's new partnership with Damascus will strengthen the Kremlin's role in the Middle East and put pressure on Washington to pull out its remaining foothold in Syria.

Russian President Vladimir Putin had originally proposed Turkiye repair ties with Assad last year during a meeting with Erdogan in Sochi. Now Erdogan has warmed to such a deal as he heads into elections this summer, the people said, as he seeks to use foreign policy to bolster his popularity at home.

Erdogan has asked Russia to ensure the safety of Syrian refugees who could return home as fighting eases. He wants to ease the political and economic cost of hosting the world's largest refugee population, or some 3.5 million people according to UN estimates. Pushing for a return, or the start of one, may help boost his popularity ahead of elections.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer

Asad Mirza is a political commentator based in New Delhi. He can be contacted on [www.asadmirza.in](http://www.asadmirza.in)



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Letter To Editor | On Self Medication

MANY thanks to Kashmir Observer for publishing a very useful and informative article on the dangers of 'self-medication' online. ("The rise of 'Dr. Google'", Aug. 24). Living in the e-world, naturally the internet is an endless source for information. And for many of us, it is our 'first go-to' for just about everything we want

to know. It is also a tempting tool for medical self-diagnosis, but which one should be extremely careful of. For their illness, the temptation of people to treat themselves through online medication is totally wrong and highly dangerous.

When you self-diagnose, you are essentially assuming that you know the subtleties that diagnosis consti-

tutes. This can be fatal as people who assume that they can surmise what is going on with themselves may miss the nuances of diagnosis. Says eminent Radiation Oncologist Sean Vance: "The wealth of medical information we have at our fingertips can be empowering. But we need to be really choosy about the sources we are using, especially when searching

topics like cancer, stroke and heart attack." The problem with seeking medical advice through the internet is that you could end up being provided with completely incorrect information, which could become an added detriment to your health.

Ranganathan Sivakumar



# AI Is Getting Creative And Feels More Human

Shalini Verma

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer the shiny new tech. The tech stream is past its sloshy beginnings and is arduously winding its way through complexities. Investors have become picky about funding AI startups. Despite the tightening purse strings, AI had its moments in 2022. It was a year of small but noteworthy breakthroughs. AI entered the phase in a technology growth trajectory when the focus is on performance and accuracy. The technology is simply trying to get better at what it started out to do.

In 2022, AI got better at generating original text, summarizing a lengthy piece of writing, giving more coherent answers. OpenAI's ChatGPT became rather eloquent at answering questions, having trained on large transformer-based language models that specialize in conversations. In essence, AI made itself useful for specific outputs like college essays.

The breakthrough technology in 2022 was Generative AI, producing impressive text, images and videos based on text prompts. OpenAI launched DALL-E 2, the most prominent among the text-to-art image generators. It connects written text to concepts, to produce images that are more realistic than their predecessors. Google and Meta gave us models that generate videos from text. Startups like Midjourney and NightCafe began challenging bigger rivals with their text-to-art tool. Stock-photo service providers incorporated image-generation models.

The fast-evolving diffusion model became the poster child for Generative AI, eclipsing the older genera-



**WE ARE NOW FACED WITH THE PROSPECTS OF A VICIOUS CYCLE OF AI GETTING TRAINED ON INTERNET JUNK, AND AI RESPONSES GETTING ADDED TO IT,** which then gets scraped again and used as training data. But why blame AI. It is trained on the information we put out there. Information by experts available online is written in an authoritative tone of voice. So, AI adopted a similar tone when mixing facts with fiction

tive adversarial networks (GANs). The model is based on thermodynamic principles. It progressively adds random noise to training data and then learns to reverse the pro-

cess to remove the noise and rebuild clean data. New research improved the ability to predict what comes next in computer vision to rapidly generate videos after being trained

on a video dataset.

At the same time, the open-source movement in AI by platforms like Hugging Face stimulated innovation. Stable AI's community-

based opensource model, Stability Diffusion allowed startups to build Generative AI tools for new kinds of content and art.

All this will broaden the scope of the Creator Economy in 2023. Generative AI has certainly lowered the barriers of our imagination. We can, in minutes, give shape to any concept our brain conjures. Generative AI startups are providing tools that will improve storytelling and brainstorming, write software code, find datapoints, write copy for ads, produce content for legal services, create new music and videos. New tools will make the best of our emails and presentation decks seem old and boring.

Yet there are limits to this rather seductive vision of AI. In 2022, AI felt more human, with flaws and all. While large language models improved, they got confident, even when they were wrong. Meta's Galactica, showed a high level of confidence, even for the very obvious false information. It is bad enough to be wrong. But being wrong and confident is a bigger problem and frankly annoying. Despite an extensive application of reinforcement learning against biases, it showed basic ones like preferring white male scientists.

We are now faced with the prospects of a vicious cycle of AI getting trained on Internet junk, and AI responses getting added to it, which then gets scraped again and used as training data. But why blame AI. It is trained on the information we put out there. Information by experts available online is written in an authoritative tone of voice. So, AI adopted a similar tone when mixing facts with fiction.

The improvement in the accu-

racy of confidence level will make AI generated text more palatable. Accomplished economists and scientists tend to have a good understanding of how much they don't know. They caution against the completeness of their own understanding, offer a caveat, or multiple plausible answers.

While purists worry about AI taking over our creative domain, futurists envision new frontiers of human creativity. The mundane parts of an artist's work, termed as creative labour, will be taken up by a machine. Freelance graphics designers, photographers and creators will reinvent their work. DALL-E 2 offers the paintbrush feature for users to add their own touch to AI generated images, making them more complex with multiple layers.

Generative AI is quickly getting embedded in design services like Canva and Figma. AI-generated essays, stories, poems or plain answers can be edited by users, thus saving time for a deeper analysis. Generative AI will make not just creators but all of us more productive in 2023.

Despite these risks, once the revenue model for Generative AI is fleshed out, we will experience its deeper influence in our digital lives. In 2010s, smartphone camera set off a chain of innovation, which led us to selfies, stories, and reels, spawning new occupations, and radically changing our society. Just as smartphone cameras made photographers out of everyone, innovation in Generative AI will make creators out of everyone.

*The article was originally published by Khaleej Times*

## ON NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS DAY

# ‘LURED FOR JOB’ Inside Kashmir's Child Trafficking Network

Swati Joshi

Rohan was brought to Kashmir with the promise of a high paying job. But little did he know that he would end up as a household worker in southern Kashmir's Pulwama area.

Before his unwitting valley visit, the minor was living in an ashram in Assam, where he used to work at weddings to earn his livelihood.

One day while returning from a wedding at night, he met a person who asked him if he wanted to earn more money. Rohan who had no one in his family except his little sister decided to go with the man in search of work.

Exhausted by the work, he slept on the train, unknown of the place the man was taking him. When he woke up he was on his way to Jammu.

"Rohan was brought to Pulwama through a consultancy firm who told us that he was an adult," said Tawseef Ahmad Ganai, a member of Child Welfare Committee (CWC), Pulwama.

When Ganai got information about Rohan, he alerted the District Child Protection Unit (DCPO) who gave the boy's custody to the CWC.

On examination, it was found out that Rohan was a student of 8th class, when brought to Kashmir—meaning that he was around 13 years old," said Ganai.

The consultancy firm was given a warning and since then it is under the scanner of the CWC, Ganai told Kashmir Observer.

People believe that there is no human trafficking in Jammu & Kashmir, but they're wrong, said Mohammad Sharif Bhat, J&K and Ladakh head of NGO, Save the Children. "I've seen many people having minor non-Kashmiri servants in their homes," he said.

Three years ago, Bhat came across a minor girl from Kolkata who was found on a farm in northern Kashmir's Kupwara district. Alerted by the Information District Social Welfare Officer, the NGO soon rescued



the traumatized kid.

"I took her to the hospital and informed the concerned authorities," said Bhat. "It was later found out that the girl was suffering from tuberculosis."

As per the records of Save the Children, a majority of minors are trafficked to Kashmir from Jharkhand. However, according to a study by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) in 2019, most incidents of children missing are reported from Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi and Bihar.

The common causes of trafficking were forced marriages, child labour, domestic help and sexual exploitation, among others, mentioned the study.

As per the data of 2011 Census, India had 10.13 million child labourers, between the age of 5-14, with Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh being the most affected states.

Kashmir receives many minors through consultancy firms who are employed as house workers.

A majority of such helpers are employed in Srinagar, said Farooq Ahmad, a Srinagar CWC member. Minor girls exceed boys in the city, he added, and their number is only increasing.

Recently, Farooq came across two-three minors who were brought to the valley through consultancy agencies. One of them was a minor girl from West Bengal whose mother had died and her father, a drunkard, sold her to the agency which brought her to Kashmir, Farooq told Kashmir Observer.

Due to the pandemic, the minor girl was kept at a shelter in Srinagar for some time, before sent to the West Bengal CWC.

However, the condition in other districts of Kashmir is relatively better. According to Fahmeeda Maqbool, Chairperson CWC Ganderbal, the number of cases of non-Kashmiri minor helpers is quite less in her district.

On being asked how the CWC handles such cases, Maqbool said that at first the date of birth is checked and if it does not comply with the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986, the child is taken under the care of CWC, and strict action is taken against the offender.

The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986 prohibits employing children below 14 and 15 years, but there is no procedure laid down in any law for deciding in which employment children are banned.

The Act was first amended in 2016, and

then again in 2017. The current Act prohibits the employment of children below the age of 14, but they can work in family business/enterprises, only if they are non-hazardous.

Advocate Shah Faisal, J&K director of Human Right Law Network (HRLN), told Kashmir Observer that he comes across numerous cases of minors being held by people without their will.

"There was this case of a child from West Bengal who wanted to go back home but the household where he was working didn't let him leave," Faisal said.

"After I filed a complaint against the family to the Chief Magistrate, the child was brought immediately and proper action was taken against the family."

Another case which the advocate recalled is of a 15-year-old Rohingya girl who was sold in Delhi at Rs 70,000 to a Kashmiri, who married her soon after arriving in the valley.

The girl's uncle contacted Faisal and a writ petition was filed to rescue her.

According to the advocate, the consultancy agencies which bring minors to Kashmir violate many norms. They provide a fake list, filled with fake numbers of parents of the minors, Faisal said. "While most of the agencies claim that the child does not have a birth certificate, they consider them above 18."

Even the families hiring minor helpers justify themselves by saying that without their assistance the child would starve, he said.

"But money paid by the families is not paid to the minor but to their agents," asserted the advocate. "This is totally an inhuman act which should be tackled strongly."

*This article was originally published on March 20, 2021 on Kashmir Observer*



## Delhi Logs 50 Hours Of Dense Fog In January, Highest Since 2019: IMD

Press Trust of India

**New Delhi:** Delhi saw around 50 hours of dense fog in January so far, the maximum in the month since 2019, a senior India Meteorological Department (IMD) official said on Tuesday.

Senior IMD scientist R K Jenamani also said the cold wave spell in Delhi in January this year was the longest in a decade.

"Delhi recorded a minimum temperature equal to or less than 4 degrees Celsius on 7 days (January 3 to January 9) in 2013, with the lowest minimum temperature of 1.9 degrees Celsius on January 6," he said.

This year, the national capital recorded a cold wave spell from January 5 to January 9, with the lowest minimum temperature of 1.9 degrees Celsius on January 8, according to the IMD data.

"Delhi has recorded around 50 hours of dense fog this month so far, which is the highest since 2019," Jenamani said.

The senior meteorologist attributed the long spell of intense cold to a large gap between two western disturbances, which meant frosty winds from the snow-clad mountains blew in for a longer-than-usual period.

The city has recorded below-normal maximum temperatures this month so far due to dense fog that reduced sunshine hours.

Low day temperatures mean early cooling and early fog

formation in the evening, he said.

The Safdarjung observatory had logged a minimum temperature of 3.8 degrees Celsius on Monday, 1.9 degrees Celsius on Sunday, 2.2 degrees Celsius on Saturday, 4 degrees Celsius on Friday and 3 degrees Celsius on Thursday.

Monday was also the fifth consecutive day that Delhi's minimum temperature was lower than most hill stations in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Chilly weather in Delhi since the start of January strained power grids and posed challenges to homeless people. It also prompted the Delhi government to extend winter vacations in schools till January 15.

According to the weather office, 'very dense fog' is when visibility is between 0 and 50 metres, and between 51 and 200 metres, it is 'dense', between 201 and 500 metres 'moderate', and between 501 and 1,000 metres 'shallow'.

In the plains, the MeT office declares a cold wave if the minimum temperature dips to 4 degrees Celsius or when it is 10 degrees Celsius and 4.5 notches below normal.

A severe cold wave is when the minimum temperature dips to 2 degrees Celsius or the departure from the normal limits is by more than 6.4 notches.

## Muslims Must Abandon 'Boisterous Rhetoric Of Supremacy': Mohan Bhagwat

Press Trust of India

**New Delhi:** Muslims have nothing to fear in India, but they must abandon their "boisterous rhetoric of supremacy," RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat has said.

In an interview to Organiser and Panchjanya, Bhagwat also spoke in support of the LGBT community, saying that they too should have their own private space and the Sangh will have to promote this view.

"People with such proclivities have always been there; for as long as humans have existed... This is biological, a mode of life. We want them to have their own private space and to feel that they, too, are a part of the society. This is such a simple issue. We will have to promote this view because all other ways of resolving it will be futile," he said.

Bhagwat said the new-found aggression among Hindus the world over was due to an awakening in the society that has been at war for over 1,000 years.

"You see, Hindu society has been at war for over 1,000 years this fight has been going on against foreign aggressions, foreign influences and foreign conspiracies. Sangh has offered its support to this cause, so have others.

There are many who have spoken about it. And it is because of all these that the Hindu society has awakened. It is but natural for those at war to be aggressive," Bhagwat said.

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief said India has been undivided (akhand) from the earliest times of recorded history, but was divided whenever the core Hindu sense was forgotten.

"Hindu is our identity, our nationality, our civilisational trait a trait that considers everyone as ours; that takes everyone along. We never say, mine is only true and yours is false. You are right at your place, I am right at mine; why to fight, let us move together this is Hindutva," Bhagwat said.

"The simple truth is this Hindusthan should remain Hindusthan. There is no harm to the Muslims living today in Bharat... Islam has nothing to fear. But at the same time, Muslims must abandon their boisterous rhetoric of supremacy. We are of an exalted race; we once ruled over this land, and shall rule it again; only our path is right, rest everyone is wrong; we are different, therefore we will continue to be so; we cannot live together they (Muslims) must abandon this narrative. In fact, all those who live here whether a Hindu or a

communist must give up this logic," the RSS chief said.

On the RSS' engagement with political issues despite being a cultural organisation, Bhagwat said the Sangh has consciously kept itself away from day-to-day politics but always engaged with politics that affect "our national policies, national interest and Hindu interest".

"The only difference is, earlier our Swayamsevak were not in positions of political power. This is the only addition in the present situation. But people forget that it is the Swayamsevak who have reached certain political positions through a political party. Sangh continues to organise the society for the organisation's sake," he said.

"However, whatever Swayamsevak do in politics, Sangh is held accountable for the same. Even if we are not implicated directly by others, there is certainly some accountability as ultimately it is in the Sangh where Swayamsevak are trained. Therefore, we are forced to think what should be our relationship, which things we should pursue (in the national interest) with due diligence," he said.

Bhagwat recalled that the Sangh was earlier seen with contempt, but those days were now over.

## Pakistan's Election Commission issues arrest warrants for Imran Khan

Press Trust of India

Islamabad: Pakistan's top election body on Tuesday issued bailable arrest warrants for former prime minister Imran Khan and other top leaders of his party in a contempt case.

The case is based on statements issued by top Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders against the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and Chief Election Commissioner Sikander Sultan Raja.

A four-member ECP bench headed by Nisar Durrani issued warrants against Khan and his close aides - Fawad Chaudhry and Asad Umar.

The election watchdog had issued notices against them in August and September last year in the exercise of its powers of contempt after the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders repeatedly bashed the commission and Raja over what they claim is their partisan policy and their alleged favouring of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

At the previous hearing, the ECP had given the PTI leaders a last chance to appear before it.

During the hearing on Tuesday, the commission rejected the pleas for their exemption from appearance and issued arrest warrants against surety bonds worth Rs 50,000 each.

The bench adjourned the hearing till January 17.

Khan has been asking the ECP chief to resign for allegedly failing to play the role of a neutral election commissioner. The chief rejected the calls by asserting he was working as per law.

The senior leaders of Khan's party expressed their dismay and anger at the move.

Chaudhry and Umar, whose arrest warrants were also issued along with Khan, termed the ECP order as biased.

"The ECP's decision to issue a bailable warrant is an insult to the high court's decision," Chaudhry tweeted.

"The case had been fixed for January 17, which was moved up to today against the rules and the case was decided," he claimed and added that it was "yet another biased decision" by the ECP members.

He asserted that the PTI leaders would "pursue a contempt of court case against this decision in the high court".

Umar, who is PTI secretary general, reminded the electoral body to focus on its primary responsibilities instead.

"They are engaged in these tasks instead of conducting elections," he said.

Umar also said that "they are themselves in contempt of court for not having conducted Islamabad [local body] elections."

### CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

#### Amid Fire Fury

dreadful blaze, most of the survivors couldn't manage living. Almost all of them are dailywagers in the municipality on a monthly salary of Rs. 6,500. "My father had to avail a loan from his pension to support our family," Bilal says. "We're now finding it hard to repay that. My mother who has had 19 operations in past lost her oxygen machines in the fire. They're very expensive. I'm not able to afford the life support for her."

The tragedy has even affected the colony's mental health as most of the inmates are now availing treatment and therapy for depression, trauma and anger issues. "The tragedy has made me frustrated," Bilal continues to voice his anguish. "My pleas for help went unnoticed. Barring Rs 50,000 from neighbors and 1 lakh from government, I wasn't able to get any help. My paltry salary is not even enough to run home and repay our loan. Due to inflation, a rice bag now costs Rs. 1000. I've no idea what to do now."

The same trauma is troubling Fatima Bilal. Before the incident, this 17-year-old girl would teach some 40 kids of her locality. But after losing her home, she's now facing space constraints. "There're just two rooms now and my family stays in them," Fatima says. "I don't find any calm place at my house to teach these kids."

For the family of Mehvish, an 11-year-old handicapped girl living in the colony, the going is even getting tougher. They had bought a motorcycle to take this specially-abled girl to doctor every week. But the fire rendered it a mere scalded scrap. The family stayed at a marriage hall with no basic facilities for three months after the tragedy. They had no money for the medical treatment of their daughter. It worsened her condition. "She began screaming aloud for no reason," Mehvish's mother recalls. "Everyone used to get intimidated by that. Unavailability of medicines undid her entire treatment."

Even schoolchildren were deeply affected by the incident. Sheeraza recounts how her seven-year-old son, Sabran, lost his books, uniform, clothes and toys in the fire incident. "He was unable to go to school for three months after the incident," the weebegone mother says. "His school eventually gave him bag and books, but closed gates for him due to his casual dressing. We couldn't afford his uniform for which he was bullied by his schoolmates. Back home, his relentless queries on our new home would leave all of us heartbroken. He used to sit in a corner in the marriage hall and not talk to anyone."

Some of these victims even lost their loved ones in the tragedy. Shakeela, a homemaker, recalls how her teen daughter, Asmat Bashir, died after coming under her burnt home's collapsed wall. "She was my youngest child and only daughter," the mother laments. "I don't worry about anything that happened to our house due to fire, but my daughter's death has left me shattered. I wish it would've happened to me more than her."

The pain has indeed become personal for the fire victims of Kashmir, and so has the struggle for rebuilding. "We didn't even have a scarf on our heads when the fire erupted," Jamsheeda, the homemaker, says. "And now, the same thing is sadly happening to many others as these midnight flames are getting out of control in Kashmir."

#### 50 Held In

detained so far during the ongoing operation and are being questioned for their alleged links with terrorists.

They said several vital leads have been found during questioning of the suspected persons and it was almost clear that the terrorists were

present in the town before carrying out the attack.

Police have also deployed additional personnel at border posts as part of enhanced security near the Line of Control (LoC) to keep a close vigil on notorious infiltration routes, the officials said.

Meanwhile, as part of efforts to strengthen VDGs and sharpen their firing skills, the officials said the Indian Army held a special firing practice session for the volunteers in Mahadev Menka firing range in Sunderbani sector this morning.

Over 50 VDGs, drawn from different villages along the LoC, took part in the firing practice session which was held in coordination with local police, the officials said.

They said weapon handlers and shooting experts of the Army demonstrated proper use of weapons to VDGs who later practised firing.

#### DGP For Modernizing

progress achieved in the "targets & goals" set for the year 2022 for the Zones/Wings Police on different fronts.

At the very outset of the meeting, the spokesperson said, the DGP complimented the zonal, range and district level officers for their work supervision to achieve the set targets & goals fixed for the year 2022.

However, Singh, he said, he impressed upon the officers to identify the areas which need our renewed focus to fix our goals of augmentation as well as of better Policing for the welfare of People and for the organization. "He said that in some areas exceptional work have been done in the year 2022 adding that for some areas we need to gear up with more energy and commitment to achieve better results in the current year," he added.

Complimenting the officers for achieving better results in challaning NDPS cases, the DGP said that hard work has to continue to book all those involved in the trade.

"He impressed upon officers to improve the quality of investigation and prosecution to increase the convictions in all the crime cases particularly UAPA and special crime cases," the spokesperson said.

Maintaining that the disposal of crime cases professionally plays a great role in image building, the DGP, he said, stressed that a lot more work on disposal of cases needs to be done.

Singh, he said, directed that previous pending cases should be cleared on priority and added that people are expecting positive changes.

According to the spokesperson, the DGP directed that the Pairvi officers in districts should focus on other cases as well besides NDPS/UAPA cases. Singh, he said, impressed upon officers to take measures for ensuring digitization of different cases which would be helpful in finding the related cases as well as of the accused involved in these cases.

"He stressed for augmenting and modernizing of more checking and Naka Points on National Highways and on inter district roads to strengthen the safe and secure environment for the people," the spokesperson said, adding that Singh said that PHQ would provide every possible support and resources to augment and strengthen the Naka points at all levels.

The DGP, he said, directed the officers to increase the range of activities under the Civic Action Programme, particularly in border areas to provide the youth of these areas various platforms.

"He impressed upon officers to visit border areas frequently to review the Border out posts functioning," the spokesperson said.

"He directed the officers to review records of history sheeters from time to time and open files of the persons found in illegal and anti social activities and publicise such Police work. He also advised for the adoption of selected

border villages by districts," he added.

Special DG CID, R.R Swain, Special DG Crime, A. K. Choudhary, ADGSP Dr SD Singh Jamwal, M. K. Sinha , Sunil Kumar, Danesh Rana, , IGS Vikramjeet Singh, B S Tuti, DIG Administration PHQ Ms Sarah Rizvi, SSP Jammu Chandan Kholi, SSP Crime Jammu Rajeshwar Singh, AIsG of PHQ, SP Ramban Ms Mohita Sharma and other gazetted officers attended the meeting at PHQ while as ADGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar, range DIsG of Jammu and Kashmir, and district SSSp attended the meeting through video conferencing.

#### Foundations Laid

farmers of J&K and accelerate the growth of J&K's economy.

"Our effort is to make sub-tropical fruit cultivation a multi-faceted business by increasing efficiency of orchards with the help of various interventions like setting up new nurseries and new plant material testing labs," he said.

He said that his government is committed to serve the present and future needs of farmers in an integrated manner.

"Our endeavour is also to convert farm's & orchard's potential into farmer's power and transform all the districts of both Jammu and Kashmir divisions into a hub of export with the cultivation of niche crops and value addition of special products," the LG said.

"In order to meet the future challenges and to ensure new wave of growth momentum, 29 projects approved by Apex Committee for Holistic Development of Agriculture & Allied sectors are being implemented. The plan worth Rs 5013 crores will bring significant change in the lives of around 13 lakh farming families of J&K including 2.62 lakh small and marginal farming families," he added.

The LG asserted that no other region in the country has made such a revolutionary intervention in the Agriculture and allied sector. He said all arrangements, from seed to market have been made through implementation framework of the plan.

Sinha further said that the Prime Minister has ensured that there would be no shortage of funds for farmers of J&K. He also made valuable suggestions to improve productivity and tackle challenges as well as opportunities of the agriculture & allied sectors.

"A strong agricultural marketing ecosystem will increase the farm income and reduce the value loss. We are working on covering the entire value chain including inputs, harvesting, processing, packing, storage, besides meeting the need of quality planting material etc. and developing infrastructure & other facilities while taking climatic conditions into consideration, the LG said.

"We have also made provisions to arrange and grow 80% of fodder requirements locally within J&K," he added.

Speaking on the services extended by the government, the LG said that around 31 lakh land passbooks have been generated and more than 400 public services have been made fully online with a provision of Public Services Guarantee Act.

On the issue of proper functioning of Ranbir Canal, Sinha said that a permanent solution via a policy for uninterrupted and proper functioning of Ranbir Canal will be ensured.

He also clarified that there is no such rule for compulsory buying of cattle from outside the region to avail the subsidy.

"And if there is any, I declare it Null & Void," he added.

This mega fruit plant nursery established with state-of-the-art equipment like Automatic weather monitoring system, will facilitate easy supply of quality fruit saplings.

The Mega Fruit Plant Nursery houses 50 different Blocks for growing mother plants of different fruits including Citrus fruits. Spanning

over more than 800 Kanal area the Mega Fruit plant nursery will grow and provide saplings of Guava, mango, litchi, other citrus fruits and also of the Dragon fruit.

It is the biggest fruit nursery in North India. In the coming time, 10 lakh saplings of fruit plants will be distributed to farmers. Micro irrigation system was also established in the mega fruit nursery for irrigation in addition to other advanced facilities and modern equipment. Tissue culture lab and other labs will also be established in the coming time, it was informed.

#### Elections Our

knows that an elected government will try to heal the wounds of the people while they only allegedly rub salt and chilli into them.

Asked about the government's decision to arm the village defence guards following the Rajouri attack, Omar said this was an admission by the government that its claims to the nation at the time of abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 had fallen flat.

"On 5 August 2019, the nation was told that the gun in Kashmir is because of Article 370 and with repealing of Article 370, the gun culture will start to subside. However, as is clear, that is not the case on ground. The kind of attack we saw in Rajouri and the situation in Kashmir, the numbers of security forces personnel are being increased all this points to the fact that the situation is not under control. The government is now compelled to take these steps," he added.

Seven persons were killed and 14 others injured in the terrorist attack on January 1 in Rajouri district's Dhangri village.

#### Mehbooba's Appeal

Kashmir chief minister was reacting to reports that Ladakhi leaders had unanimously opted out of the high-powered committee formed by the Union Home Ministry to address their demands, which include granting statehood to Ladakh.

"Urge my Ladakhi brothers & sisters to stand with us in our collective fight & struggle for safeguarding our unique identity & interests. For the past three years, a vicious propaganda has been unleashed to create fissures between J&K & Ladakh," Mehbooba said in a series of tweets.

"Relieved that people of Ladakh finally realise that their interests & identity can be saved only if they unite with J&K. They've finally called off GOIs bluff & disinterest in granting them statehood & protecting their resources.

"It's time we recognise that our struggle will reap dividends only if we stand united," she added.

Mehbooba said the decision of Ladakhi leaders to stay away from the panel did not augur well for the Centre as it went against the claim that scrapping Jammu and Kashmir's special status was acceptable to people of the erstwhile state.

"This certainly doesn't bode well for GOI especially amidst a border standoff with China & also demolishes their lies that 5th August was beneficial or acceptable for people of J&K including Ladakh," she said.

#### Azad's Newly Launched

was the first person to distance from him.

On August 26, Akram along with five other former lawmakers resigned from the Congress in support of Azad.

On December 22, Azad-led party faced a severe setback when its three top leaders- former deputy CM Tara Chand, former minister Manohar Lal Sharma and Balwan Singh- were expelled on charges of indulging in anti-party activities.

Last week, 17 of its leaders including for Tara Chand, former minister Peerzada Muhammad Sayeed, Balwan Singh returned to Congress ahead of J&K leg Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra.

Amid continuous exodus of leaders, senior

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh today called it as "Disappearing Azad Party".

Jairam Ramesh, who has been taking potshots at Azad after he severed his five-decade old ties with the Congress, termed his DPAP as "Disappearing Azad Party."

Ramesh made these comments on a tweet of youth Congress spokesman Dr. Jahanzaib Sirwal.

Sirwal had tweeted that "after Melbourne the fastest pitch to have the highest wicket fall is DAP"—(KNO)

#### Shehla Rashid

has since quit public life.

The proposal for prosecution sanction moved by the Delhi Police and supported by the Home Department of the city government had submitted that Shehla tweeted about the Army on August 18, 2019 -- 'Armed Forces are entering houses at night, picking up boys, ransacking houses, deliberately spilling rations on floor, mixing oil with rice, etc'.

In another tweet, she had said, "In Shopian, 04 men were called into the Army Camp and interrogated" (tortured). A mic was kept close to them so that the entire area could hear them scream and be terrorized. This created an environment of fear in the entire area."

The Home Department had observed that the "nature of case, location to which the tweets refer and making false allegations against the Army make it a serious issue".

"The tweets by (Shehla) Shora needed to be proceeded against for creating religious fault-lines in J&K and a case was made for prosecution under Section 153A IPC," it said.

#### 3 Killed As

However, they said, the doctors declared them dead. The deceased have been identified as Mohammad Aslam son of Mohammad Ismail, Mohammad Ishaq son of Mohammad Ibrahim and Mohammad Yaseen son of Ghulkam Hassan Wani (driver).

Confirming the accident SSP Doda Abdul Qayoom said three people were killed in the incident. A police officer said that a case has been registered and further investigations taken up.

#### OGW Held

of LeT, etc. recovered. FIR 02/23 in sections of UAPA & NDPS act registered in Kothibagh PS," the police spokesperson said.

#### Falling Poplar

died on the way to the hospital. (KNT)

#### Detenue's House

Danish Khurshid Bhat, Tanvir Ahmed Wani and Tawseef Ahmed Bhat of Shopian district were killed in Nagabal Shopian encounter. After the encounter, police had detained Usman Gulzar Wani for assisting the ultras.

Police confirmed that the house of Usman has been attached for helping militants in Shopian district. (KNT)

#### 5 Clinics, Labs

and Clinical Establishment (Registration and Licensing) Act 2010.

Meanwhile, the CMO has asked all the private clinics, Laboratories, Nursing Homes and other related establishments to apply online for provisional registration under Clinical Registration Act, if not obtained yet, to avoid legal action under rules.

#### Stray Dogs

The local inhabitants have in the meantime expressed concern over the rapid growth in canine population in the area.

The locals appealed to district and tehsil administration to take preventive measures to safeguard human lives and livestock



# RAJOURI ATTACK: Three families Lose Breadwinners

Press Trust Of India

**RAJOURI:** The recent attack in Dhangri village in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district left behind a trail of destruction with three families losing their breadwinners.

Seven persons belonging to a particular community were killed and 14 others injured when terrorists swooped on Dhangri on January 1, on the New Year Day, and fired indiscriminately on the local residents and left behind an improvised Explosive Device (IED) before fleeing under the cover of darkness.

While five persons died in the firing, two children -- aged four and 16 -- lost their lives in the IED blast the next morning.

Among the dead were two young brothers, a father-son

duo and an ex-serviceman, who were the only breadwinners of their families.

Saroj Bala (58) is shell shocked and the only survivor in the family after her two sons -- Deepak Sharma (27) and Prince Sharma (21) -- died in the attack. Her husband Rajinder Sharma had died of a serious ailment four years ago.

Pritam Lal (55) and his 31-year-old son Shishu Pal, who were working as labourers to earn their livelihood, were killed by terrorists inside their house.

"I was cooking dinner for the family when the terrorists started firing in the village. They asked for identity cards and pushed me and my minor children -- a son and a daughter -- into a store room before firing on them," Shishu Pal's widow Neeta Devi told PTI.



She said her father-in-law used to work as a labourer in the village, while her husband

was working for a construction agency. Her mother-in-law had died some years ago. "There is no one who can feed us," she said, as tears streamed down her face.

Satish Kumar (45), who retired from the Army three and a half years ago, was returning home when he heard firing shots.

Kumar gave his life saving his family from the terrorists, his brother-in-law Chaman Sharma said.

"After his retirement from service, his primary focus was taking good care of his family and education of his children. He was a man with a golden heart and was always available in happiness and sorrow for everyone," he said.

He said Kumar was fired upon by the terrorists while

he was trying to block their entry into his house and in the process his wife Saroj (36), daughter Arushi (14) and son Shub Sharma (17) also received bullet injuries as they came out to see what is happening at the gate.

"Saroj received a bullet injury in her lower back, Arushi in her leg and Shub Sharma in his knee. Both Saroj and Arushi are undergoing treatment in Government Medical College (GMC) hospital Rajouri, while Shub is admitted to a hospital in Punjab," Chaman Sharma said.

Dheeraj Sharma, a local sarpanch, demanded special attention of the government for the three families to help them cope up with the situation besides ensuring better education to the surviving children.

## NC Asks Home Minister To Convene APM To Bail Out' J&K From Uncertainty

Press Trust Of India

**JAMMU:** The National Conference on Tuesday urged Union Home Minister Amit Shah to convene an all-party meeting to "bail out" the people of Jammu and Kashmir from the prevailing situation of uncertainty and fear psychosis following targeted killings by militants.

It alleged that the Lieutenant Governor administration has "miserably failed" to handle the present situation in the Union Territory.

Rattan Lal Gupta, provincial president (Jammu), National Conference, asked the home minister to convene an all-party meeting to bail out the people of J-K from the prevailing situation of uncertainty and fear psychosis on account of frequent terrorists activities, especially against the minority community both in Kashmir and Jammu provinces.

Gupta, along with senior party leaders, visited Dhangri village in Rajouri on Monday to offer condolences to the bereaved family members of the victims of the terror attacks. Seven people were killed by terrorists in the village last week.

Gupta expressed concern

over the Lt Governor's "hesitant approach" in calling an all-party meeting despite several requests by different political parties, including the NC, over the burning issues which the people are confronting with in J-K after the targeted killings, a party statement said.

He said the "dillydallying stance" of the Lt Governor has proved deleterious for the UT as many precious lives have been lost to terror strikes. It is the reason the NC has now decided to approach the Union home minister to come out with a concrete plan after consulting all political entities through a meaningful meeting to be conducted as soon as possible, he added.

Gupta also requested the home minister to personally visit Dhangri to meet the affected families and also to assess the ground realities.

"Issues which the people are finding it difficult to confront these days in J-K include selective killings, uncontrollable inflation, unemployment, recruitment scams, unprecedented price hike of LPG, unavailability of civic amenities, relocation of employees working in Valley, rampant corruption and others," the NC leader said.

## Man Held For Murdering Sister-In-Law After She Resists Rape Attempt

Press Trust Of India

**SRINAGAR:** A man was arrested for allegedly killing his sister-in-law after she resisted his rape attempt in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said on Tuesday.

The woman was brought to sub-district hospital Pampore in an unconscious state on Sunday but she was declared brought dead by the doctors there, a police spokesman said.

"Since the cause of her death prima facie appeared to be suspicious, police after completion of medico legal procedure initiated inquest proceedings under section 174 CrPC to ascertain the cause of the death," he said.

He said during investigation, several family members, including the husband of the deceased, were called for questioning.

"After questioning of some of the relatives of the victim, the investigating team zeroed in on a man -- the brother-in-law of the deceased. After sustained questioning, he confessed about his involvement in the murder of his sister-in-law," the spokesman said.

He said the man revealed that his sister-in-law was alone at home on Sunday and he tried to take advantage of the situation to exploit her sexually.

"However, the deceased strongly resisted this and raised hue and cry. Although, he tried to pacify her initially, he strangled her to death when she continuously called for help, and fled the spot," the spokesman added.

The man accompanied the victim when she was taken to the hospital so that no one would suspect his involvement in the murder, he said.

## LG Meets Vice-Chairperson DDC Kupwara, Public Delegation

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** Haji Farooq Ahmad Mir, Vice Chairperson, DDC Kupwara called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at the Raj Bhawan here on Tuesday, an official spokesperson said.

Mir, he said, submitted a memorandum of demands to the Lt Governor pertaining to various issues of public importance of Lolab area including augmentation of sports, education & infrastructure facilities, road connectivity, sanctioning of fire station, development of religious shrines and tourism promotion.

Similarly, the spokesperson said, Riyaz Bashir Naaz, DDC member Poonch apprised the Lt Governor about devel-

opment issues of Poonch related to upgradation of health facilities, road connectivity, power supply etc.

Later, a public delegation from Inderwal area of Kishtwar headed by Sh Tariq Hussain Keen, J&K Secretary, BJP Minority Morcha projected various concerns of minority communities, Village Defence and Dhok Defence Committee members; promotion of Pahari languages, besides other development issues of Bunjwah, Drabshalla, Mughalmaidan, Chatroo, Marwah & Warwan.

The Lt Governor while interacting with the members of the visiting delegations assured them that all the genuine issues raised by them would be addressed on merit.

## Jammu Police Seeks Details Of Tenants, Domestic Help From Landlords

Press Trust Of India

**JAMMU:** The Jammu administration on Tuesday directed landlords to submit details of their tenants and domestic helps to the concerned police station.

The move comes after several instances, in which anti-national elements sought hideouts in residential areas in the guise of tenants and domestic helpers, have been reported in Jammu.

An order issued by Jammu District Magistrate Avny Lavasa said the landlords shall submit the details within three days of the issuance of the order.

"All owners shall, after the issuance of this order, within three days submit without fail the detailed particulars of the tenants as per the declaration

form to be signed by both the owner and the tenant, to the concerned police station, either in person or by registered post addressed to the concerned Station House Officer," the order read.

It said the step was taken after Jammu's Senior Superintendent of Police brought to Lavasa's notice that there was an imminent need to conduct verification following instances where anti-national and anti-social elements have sought hideouts in residential areas in the guise of tenants and domestic helpers.

It is necessary that some measures be taken to make the landlords and property owners accountable before renting out and making available their premises to tenants and domestic helps, she said.

"I consider the threat posed by such adverse elements as imminent danger to public safety and security, that warrants immediate preventive measures under Section 144 of CrPC," the top district official said.

The owners who have already let, sub-let, or rented out their houses on any date prior to the issuance of this order, shall submit the detailed particulars of tenants as per the declaration form to the concerned police station with immediate effect, the order said.

"Owners, who have allowed jhuggies on their lands, shall also be required to disclose the details as per the declaration form," she added.

"Any person contravening this order shall be punishable under section 188 of Indian Penal Code," the order said.

## Govt Simplifies Procedure For Reimbursement Of Educational Expenses Of Children Of Killed Cops

Press Trust Of India

**JAMMU:** The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Tuesday said a simplified procedure will be followed for reimbursement of educational expenses of children of the policemen killed in the line of duty.

Reacting to the development, Director General of Police Dilbag Singh said it a wonderful initiative and extended his gratitude to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha for it.

"Sanction is hereby accorded to the adoption of procedure for meeting the expenditure on account of education of wards of martyrs (two eldest children) up to class 12th in any school in J&K of such personnel of police, who are martyred in course of performing duties attributed to militancy related incidents and violence," an official said.

The government shall reimburse the expenditure towards monthly fee, transportation charges (up to a maximum ceiling of Rs 3,000 per child per month), one-time annual uniform charges (up to a maximum ceiling of Rs 10,000 per child per year) and one-time expenditure on books (only textbooks prescribed by the respective boards) if any, up to class 12th in any school (both

government and private), within the territorial jurisdiction of the union territory, it said.

"The schools would require to be duly recognized by the government and affiliated with the J&K board of school education and central board of school education or any other registered board in India. The private schools shall treat these students as part of admission under EWS and reimbursement will be made accordingly," the order said.

It said reimbursement will be made for the first two children and in case the second one is a twin, then both the twins shall be entitled to reimbursement under this arrangement.

The reimbursement on account of monthly fee, transport charges, shall be made on quarterly basis by the concerned district superintendent of police, (on the production of relevant vouchers), where the family of the martyr ordinarily resides. While as the reimbursement on account of expenditure incurred on uniform and books shall be reimbursed in the month of April every year subject to the ceiling and condition, it said.

The payment shall be made to the legal guardian (whoever incurs such expenditure on the wards) by the concerned dis-

trict superintendent of police on production of valid proof of guardianship by the legal guardian, the order added.

In case owing to any dispute, the children of a particular martyr having varying guardians - one child living with mother and the other with his family, the reimbursement shall be made to both the guardians on actual basis, however, on the production of separate guardianship certificate to be issued by the concerned school authority, it further read.

The order said the children will be eligible for reimbursement of education expenses even if the widow of the martyr remarries.

As per the order, the concerned district SP shall draw the claims on account of school fee and transport charges on quarterly basis and cost of books and uniform on annual basis from the budgetary provisions to be placed at his disposal and further shall ensure that the school fee is not exorbitant and is at par with the rates charged by the school to other students.

DGP Singh said the initiative will help the wards of the fallen heroes in empowering their academic and career goals by removing the financial barrier.

## Admin Fully Equipped To Tackle Snow Clearance Ops: DC Kupwara

Observer News Service

**KUPWARA:** In view of prediction of Snowfall in the valley, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Dr. Doifode Sagar Dattatray on Tuesday said that the District Administration Kupwara has geared up all the men and machinery in the district to tackle with any situation arising in view of prediction of snowfall in coming days.

The DC said that adequate

preparations have been made by the district administration for snow clearance measures adding that 50 snow clearance machines are available with different departments including Mechanical Engineering Department, PMGSY, PWD and BEACON which are fully equipped.

He said that all engineering departments including SDRF staff are available on the ground so as to ensure restoration of public services in

minimum time during the expected snowfall.

The DC said that Tehsildars have been specially directed to visit their concerned areas and ensure streamlining of public service delivery including monitoring of Snow clearance operation, inspection of Receiving Stations and Power Supply Feeders.

Doifode Sagar appealed to the people to avoid venturing out in high altitude and ALC areas to avoid any exigency during the Snowfall.

## Kashmir Handicrafts To Get Two More GI Registrations

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Department of Handicrafts and Handloom (H&H) Kashmir has submitted the dossier for registration of two more crafts viz. Crewel and Chain-stitch to Intellectual Property India, Chennai, an apex body for the registration and better protection of geographical indications (GI) relating to goods in India.

The Director, H&H Kashmir, while highlighting the significance of the GI certification of Crewel and Chain-stitch, said that the department is working hard to get more crafts from Kashmir under the ambit of GI certification so that the genuine handmade Kashmir Handicrafts will get due recognition across the globe.

He said there are more than 10,000 craftsmen associated with the twin crafts of Crewel and Chain-stitch scattered over different districts of the Kashmir region and they all shall get benefitted from the GI certification of these crafts. These crafts have an export potential of more than 200 crores, he added.

Geographical indication tagging has acquired a greater significance ever since the focus has shifted towards Vocal for Local. The H&H department has been facilitating the promotion of GI-tagged products symbolizing the empowerment of the artisans.

These initiatives are aimed to help recognize and promote age-old crafts and methods that are otherwise in danger of being lost due to urbanization and industrialization, Director H&H said.

It is worth mentioning here that machine made products have implied a challenge to the entire Handicraft and Handloom sectors, however the GI certification will go a long way in preserving the crafts as well as facilitating buyers in making the purchase of genuine handmade products.

So far 7 major crafts from Kash-



mir namely Kani Shawl, Pashmina, Sozni, Paper-Machie, Walnut Wood Carving, Khatamband, and Hand Knotted Carpets have already been GI certified. Besides, the process of GI registration of five more crafts viz., Kashmir Namda, Wagguv, Shikara, Gabba and Kashmir Willow Bat is already under process and the dossier for GI certification of all these crafts has been submitted with the GI authorities in Chennai last month.

One of the major success stories in recent time for crewel and chain stitch has come from Noor Ari a women led Producer Company, has recently collaborated with Fab India, an international brand to provide various crewel and chain stitch items.

The Department of H&H from the last 2 years has been continuously upgrading the testing and labelling facilities for GI certification of different crafts and because of the aggressive promotion of GI certification of different crafts by the Department, a huge number of manufacturers and exporters are approaching the department for testing and labelling of the GI certified products.

The Department is also in process of launching the QR-Code-based GI labelling of 6 crafts as QR-Code-GI labeling for Carpets was already initiated last year. Additionally, non-GI crafts will also be brought under the ambit of QR code Labelling.

Moreover, the visitors have also shown much interest in purchasing exclusive GI-certified crafts post these efforts of promoting Geographical Indication throughout the country and away.

## Jammu Is Worst Victim Of BJP's Political Gimmick: Mehbooba

Press Trust Of India

**JAMMU:** PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday said Jammu is the worst victim of BJP's political gimmick, alleging that the saffron party is surrendering interests of people from the region to benefit big corporate houses.

She also said her party risked its political interests to honour aspirations of the people of Jammu region who had given huge mandate to the right wing party in the 2014 assembly elections.

The former chief minister reiterated her party's stand that integration of the two regions of Kashmir and Jammu was the essence of development and prosperity of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Jammu, once considered as the economic hub of the erstwhile state, is the worst victim of BJP's political gimmick. People in Kashmir always suspected the intentions of BJP but Jammu gave a huge mandate to the party (in 2014 assembly polls) on the assurances of political and economic empowerment," Mufti said while

addressing a meeting of senior party leaders here.

Accusing the BJP of indulging in "divisive and deceitful" politics, Mufti said the saffron party is surrendering interests of people to benefit big corporate houses of the country.

"From economy to cultural identity, BJP has looted Jammu of everything which it was once proud of. Today big corporate houses from across the country have deep penetration into Jammu, unemployment rate is alarming, developmental growth is at standstill while even the militancy has spilled over to the region," she said.

Mufti said Kashmir and Jammu are interdependent with each other and PDP has always tried to be the bridge between the people on both sides.

"(PDP patron) Mufti Muhammad Sayed even risked political interests of his party to honour aspirations of Jammu region, which had given a huge mandate to the right wing party in previous assembly elections," she said referring to the PDP forming the government in alliance with BJP.





## Umran Malik Breaks Own Record For Fastest Indian Bowler

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** 'Jammu Express' Umran Malik clocked 156 kmph to break his own record of the fastest bowl bowled by an Indian bowler in international cricket. Umran achieved the feat in the first ODI between India and Sri Lanka at the Barsapara Cricket Stadium, Guwahati on Tuesday.

The speedy delivery was bowled in his second over of the match and broke Umran's previ-

ous record of 155 kmph, which came only a week ago during the 1st T20I against the same opposition in Mumbai. Jasprit Bumrah held the previous record when he bowled 153.36 kmph.

Umran Malik was the best bowler on the night, too. Taking 3/57 in his 8 overs, the Jammu-born pacer snapped up Pathum Nissanka (72), Charith Asalanka (23) and Dunith Wellalage (0).

Umran Malik's fastest delivery yet was clocked at 156.9 in IPL 2022

## J&K Ranji Team Tottering At 146/6 Against Punjab

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** J&K senior men's cricket team took on Punjab in the 73rd Santosh Trophy on Tuesday at IS Bindra Cricket Stadium, PCA, Mohali.

Only 33 overs were played on Day 1 of the four-day test between the two teams who lie in Elite Group D.

Barely 3 balls after he had won the toss and decided to bat first, J&K skipper and opening batter Shubham Khajuria was bowled for 0 (3). Vivrant Sharma, who will play for SunRisers Hyderabad in the 2023 season of the IPL, steadied the ship for J&K by making 41 (45). His franchise mate, Abdul Samad, smacked a quick fire 45 (29) to top score for his team on Day 1.

Musaif Ajaz 10 (18), Shivansh Sharma 1 (13) and Abid Mushtaq



14 (25) failed to make any meaningful contributions with the bat, as Punjab bowlers Siddharth Kaul (3/58) and Baltej Singh (2/35) ran through J&K's top order.

J&K wicketkeeper Fazil Rashid 26 (39) and Aqib Nabi 6 (26) were on the crease at stumps.

J&K Playing XI: Shubham Khajuria (c), Fazil Rashid (wk), Vivrant Sharma, Shivansh Sharma, Abdul Samad, Abid Mushtaq, Musaif Ajaz, Rohit Sharma, Aqib Nabi, Taizeem Younis Tak, Umar Nazir.

## Brook, Gardner Named ICC Players Of The Month



Press Trust of India

**DUBAI:** Harry Brook on Tuesday bagged his maiden ICC Men's Player of the Month crown after a blistering run of scores which helped England claim a historic World Test Championship (WTC) series victory in Pakistan.

Australia's Ashleigh Gardner secured the ICC Women's Player of the Month award as her contributions with bat and ball guided her side to T20I series victory in India, and led her to the summit of the Player Rankings for all-rounders.

Both scoop their awards following a global vote conducted among media representatives, ICC Hall of Famers, former international players, and fans registered at icc-cricket.com.

Brook was largely unstoppable during England's triumphant Test return to Pakistan, scoring centuries in each match as the tourists sealed a 3-0 victory. Despite having only played a solitary Test match before ar-

riving in Pakistan, Brook lit up the series with his aggressive strokeplay and firepower, seamlessly integrating into England's pioneering style of play in the longer format.

He started the series in Rawalpindi in emphatic fashion, hitting 19 fours and five sixes on his way to a blistering 153 in the first innings, before another quickfire 87 in the second innings ensured Pakistan fell short on a dramatic final day. This set the tone for his breakout month, and he followed up with two further impressive centuries - 108 in Multan and 111 in Karachi.

Australia's talented all-rounder Gardner celebrates her maiden Player of the Month crown to cap a landmark month.

Gardner's impressive 2022 ended with a flourish in December as she registered a total of 115 runs at an impressive strike rate of 166.66, taking seven wickets along the way at an average of 18.28 in the hard fought T20I series victory against rivals India.

## 'Mediocrity Is Retained': Prasad On India's Selection Calls

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Former pacer Venkatesh Prasad has criticized the exclusion of Ishan Kishan from India's playing eleven for the first ODI against Sri Lanka, saying "there is no way you drop a player for scoring a double hundred".

Ahead of the first ODI against Sri Lanka on Tuesday, India skipper Rohit Sharma made it clear that he will open alongside Shubman Gill and not Kishan, who scored a double hundred in his last innings in the 50-over format.

"Think fair would have been to

give chance to a man who scored a double hundred in India's last ODI, and in a series where India lost two games and the series.

"Have all the time in the world for Gill, but no way you drop a player for scoring a double ton," Prasad said in a series of tweets.

"In Eng. Pant scored a hundred in the final ODI and helped India win the series. However based on T20 form was dropped from ODI team. KL Rahul on the other hand barring a couple of innings has failed consistently but retains his place. Performance is not the foremost parameter. Sad," the 53-year-old added.



## Kohli Rules With 45th ODI Ton In India's Big Win



Press Trust of India

**GUWAHATI:** An authoritative Virat Kohli headlined India's utterly dominant performance with his 45th ODI hundred as the hosts pummelled Sri Lanka by 67 runs in the first of the three-match series here on Tuesday.

Asked to bat first, India rode former skipper Kohli's 87-ball 113 and fluent half-centuries from his successor Rohit Sharma (83) and Shubman Gill (70) to rake up an imposing 373 for seven in their allotted quota of overs on a batting-friendly strip. In reply, the Sri Lankans were never in the hunt and ended at 306 for eight in 50 overs to hand the hosts a 1-0 lead in the rubber.

After opener Pathum Nissanka fell for 72, visiting captain Dasun Shanaka waged a lone battle and produced a counter-attacking century, even as the others failed to put up any resistance.

In the end, Shanaka remained not out on 108 off 88 balls.

Young speed merchants Umran Malik (3/57) and Mohammed Siraj (2/30) then put the icing on the cake in a lopsided game.

Continuing his blazing form into the New Year, Kohli slammed his 73rd international hundred overall and made the Lankans pay for two dropped catches.

The exuberant Siraj once again bowled splendidly with the new ball and reduced the Islanders to 23/2 inside six overs to set the tone.

Kohli, who scored 113 against Bangladesh in Chattogram in India's last ODI, continued from where he left.

The class of Kohli was on full display as he smashed 12 fours and one six and held on to one end while wickets fell at regular intervals in the middle overs.

This was Kohli's third hundred from three ODIs at Guwahati -- two here at the Barsapara and one at the Nehru Stadium.

He was dropped twice -- on 52 and 81 -- on his way to his 45th ODI century, four shy of

maestro Sachin Tendulkar's all-time record of 49 hundreds in the 50-over format.

Rohit responded to the criticism of benching the in-form duo of Ishan Kishan and Suryakumar Yadav by giving India a solid start in the company of Gill.

The Indian skipper had preferred Gill over Ishan who had to sit out despite a record-breaking 210 in the last one-day.

Continuing his dream run in ODIs, Gill brought up his fifth half-century off 51 balls.

It was a one-way traffic for the Indian opening duo before Shanaka dismissed Gill. The youngster was guilty of playing across the line and was trapped in front of the wicket.

Looking to bring an end to his century drought, Rohit too perished in addition of 30 runs to the total. He was cleaned up by debutant Dilshan Madushanka.

The run-rate slowed down and it was a welcome respite for the Sri Lankans who were staring at a 400-plus target.

## JKSC Secretary Meets AIFF President Kalyan Chaubey

- Discusses roadmap for football activities in J&K
- AIFF to partner with J&K Admin, announcement soon

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** J&K Sports Council (JKSC) Secretary, Nuzhat Gull, on Tuesday called on All India Football Federation (AIFF) President, Kalyan Chaubey and Secretary General, Dr. Shaji Prabhakaran, in New Delhi to discuss the roadmap for accelerated football activities in J&K.

Secretary, while elaborating people's love and passion for football in J&K, said that overwhelming public presence at TRC Football Stadium to watch Real Kashmir FC play indicates their deep urge for vigorous promotion of this world famous sports. There is huge need of boosting the frequency and quality of football events here, she added. She said that main purpose of this meeting is to work out strategies for restoring

matches were played across the region in the late hours. Citing an instance of the Industrial Cup held in the apple town of Sopore in North Kashmir, she said that a tourney like that turned into an alternate source of entertainment and since sports have a lot of community impact, we saw the number swelling with each new event.

Kalyan Chaubey, President AIFF, giving details of the meeting, said that there is no dearth of sports talent in J&K and we are committed to work with the stakeholders in the region to bridge gap between the dream and realization. We would work earnestly towards ensuring that the game and its infrastructure in the region grow to a stage where competitions could be conducted at all the levels, he added.

Discussions were also held on hosting national team camps and capacity building of human



the pristine glory of this potential game in J&K which has enjoyed a numero-uno status for a long time.

She added that since AIFF in its 'Vision 2047', plans to develop football across the country and take Indian Football forward, J&K Football too aspires to reach its zenith. She hoped that AIFF will lend all possible help in this direction.

Nuzhat Gull informed that almost every district has a football stadium and more than fifty-plus stadia have a high mast lighting system and this year hundreds of

resources in terms of referees and coaches for both youth and grassroots level players especially for women footballers.

Dr. Prabhakaran said, "Since the Government of India has already taken a lot of sporting initiatives in J&K, AIFF will also chip in for the cause." He said that AIFF is also contemplating a possible MoU with the J&K administration to help build capacity in the local system and take the game forward. He hinted at a possible announcement of this partnership in the month of March this year.



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